

Introduced by Senator Lara

February 13, 2013

An act relating to postsecondary education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 265, as introduced, Lara. Postsecondary education: electronic textbooks.

Existing law urges publishers of textbooks to take specified actions aimed at reducing the amounts that students pay for textbooks, including providing to faculty and departments considering textbook orders a list of all the different products the publisher sells. By January 1, 2020, existing law requires publishers of textbooks offered for sale at postsecondary educational institutions to make the textbooks available, in whole or in part, to the extent practicable, in an electronic format, and requires electronic versions of textbooks to include the same content as the printed versions.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would ensure clear and consistent practices surrounding electronic textbooks for the state's college and university students.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (1) The cost of attending the state's public colleges and
- 4 universities has skyrocketed in recent years. While fees often tend
- 5 to be the most visible cost, other non-tuition-related costs, such as

1 the cost of textbooks, significantly burden both students and their
2 families. For example, the average annual student budget for
3 textbooks at the California Community Colleges can be almost
4 150 percent of the cost of tuition.

5 (2) The State Auditor's Office has reported that increases in
6 textbook prices have significantly outpaced median household
7 income, which makes it more likely that some students will forgo
8 or delay attending college.

9 (3) In response to these trends, the state has taken several steps
10 to address the rising costs of textbooks, including making textbooks
11 available in electronic format. Electronic textbooks have the
12 potential to increase access and convenience and reduce costs for
13 students.

14 (4) Students, however, have encountered several problems with
15 online materials, including undisclosed fees, inconsistent refund
16 policies, and unclear access privileges.

17 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that
18 would ensure clear and consistent practices surrounding electronic
19 textbooks for the state's college and university students.